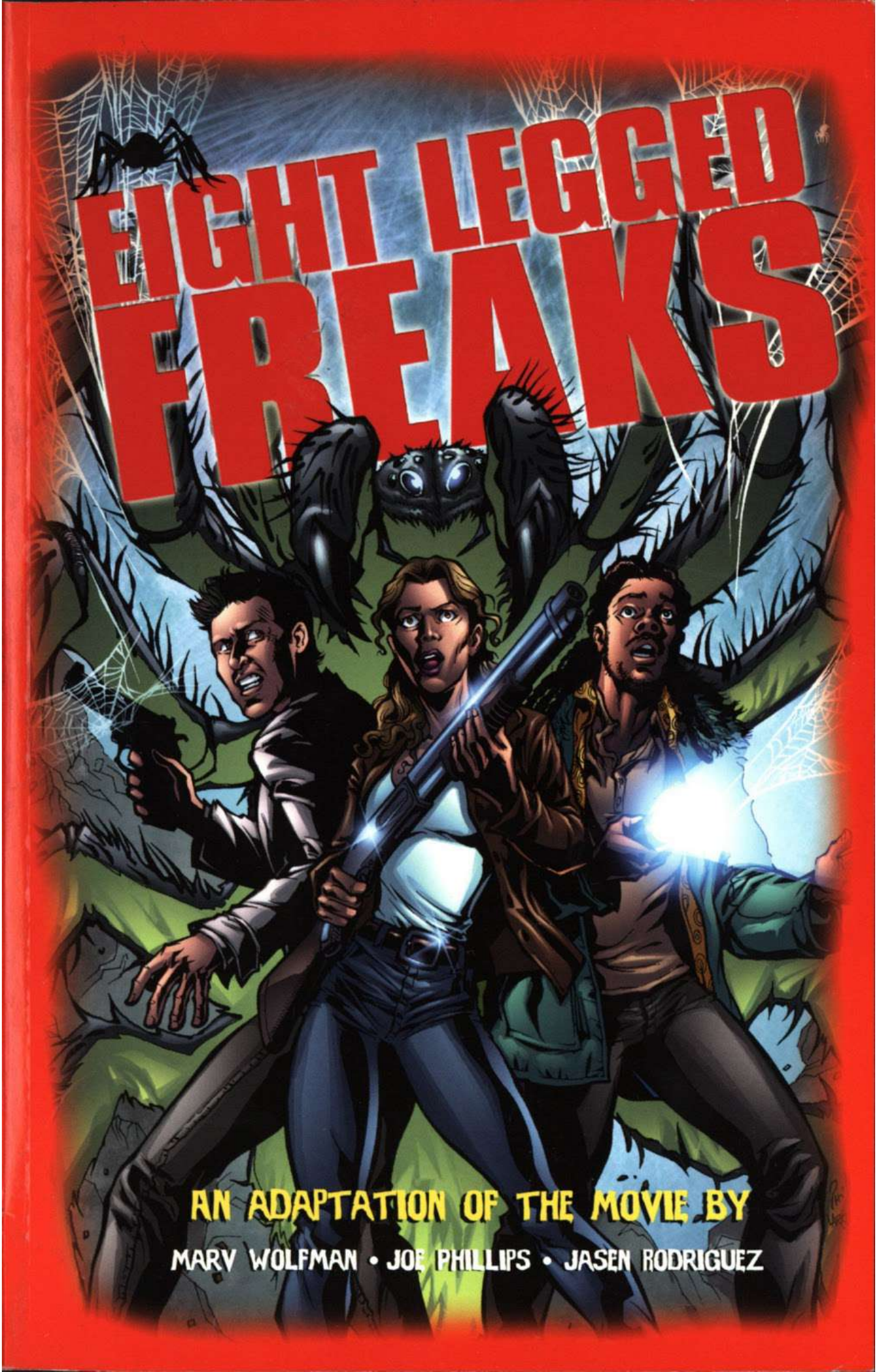
EIGHT LEGGED
FREAKS
AN ADAPTATION OF THE MOVIE BY
MARV WOLFMAN • JOE PHILLIPS • JASEN RODRIGUEZ

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IN ASSOCIATION WITH VILLAGE ROADSHOW PICTURES AND NPV ENTERTAINMENT
AN ELECTRIC ENTERTAINMENT PRODUCTION DAVID ARQUETTE "EIGHT LEGGED FREAKS"
KARI WUHRER SCOTT TERRA DOUG E. DOUG SCARLETT JOHANSSON MUSIC BY JOHN OTTMAN
CO-PRODUCER KELLY VAN HORN EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS ROLAND EMMERICH PETER WINTHER WILLIAM FAY
STORY BY ELLORY ELKAYEM & RANDY KORNFIELD SCREENPLAY BY JESSE ALEXANDER & ELLORY ELKAYEM
PRODUCED BY DEAN DEVLIN AND BRUCE BERMAN DIRECTED BY ELLORY ELKAYEM

PG-13 PARENTS STRONGLY CAUTIONED
Some Material May Be Inappropriate for Children Under 13.
Sci-Fi Violence, Brief Sexuality And Language

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AFTERWORD

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(s02)

INTRO BY DEAN DEVLIN

A FEW YEARS AGO, ROLAND EMMERICH CAME INTO MY OFFICE AND ASKED A SIMPLE QUESTION: "HOW CAN WE BRING BACK THE KIND OF LOW-BUDGET SCI-FI/HORROR GENRE MOVIES OF THE LATE 1950s/EARLY 1960s AND MAKE THEM VIABLE FOR TODAY'S AUDIENCE?" ROLAND HAD ALWAYS LOVED MOVIES LIKE ***THEM*** AND ***TARANTULA,*** AS HAD I. THERE WAS SOMETHING ABOUT THE SPIRIT OF THOSE MOVIES THAT WERE COMPLETELY UNIQUE. I REMEMBER AS A BOY WATCHING THE LOCAL TELEVISION STATION ON SUNDAY AFTERNOONS WHEN THEY'D SHOW THEIR "CREATURE FEATURE." MY FRIENDS WOULD COME OVER AND WE'D EAT JUNK FOOD AS WE CHEERED ON GIANT MUTATED CREATURES AS THEY DESTROYED EVERYTHING IN SIGHT. I AGREED WITH ROLAND THAT WE SHOULD TRY TO FIND A WAY TO REVIVE THE GENRE.

IT WAS RIGHT ABOUT THAT TIME THAT WE GOT OUR HANDS ON A SHORT FILM DIRECTED BY A YOUNG MAN FROM NEW ZEALAND. HIS NAME WAS ELLORY ELKAYEM AND HE HAD MADE A FILM CALLED ***LARGER THAN LIFE.*** MADE IN BLACK AND WHITE WITH A WONDERFULLY OVERWROUGHT SCORE, THE MOVIE WAS A LOVE LETTER TO MONSTER MOVIES OF YESTERYEAR. THE FILM WAS SCARY BUT FUNNY AND THE EFFECTS WERE TERRIFIC.

WE ASKED ELLORY TO COME TO HOLLYWOOD AND MEET WITH US. IT QUICKLY BECAME CLEAR TO US THAT WE HAD THE RIGHT MAN FOR THE JOB. WE PARTNERED ELLORY UP WITH A YOUNG SCREENWRITER NAMED JESSE ALEXANDER AND TOGETHER THEY WROTE THE FIRST DRAFT OF THE SCRIPT, THEN CALLED ***ARAC ATTACK.***

WHEN THE SCRIPT CAME IN, ROLAND AND I LOVED IT. WE THOUGHT IT HAD JUST THE RIGHT BALANCE OF REVERENCE FOR THE GENRE AND YET HAD ITS TONGUE FIRMLY PLANTED IN CHEEK. IT TOOK US TWO YEARS TO GET THE FILM FINISHED BUT THE END RESULT IS A WONDERFUL, DARKLY COMIC ADVENTURE ABOUT A GROUP OF TOWNSFOLK WHO HAVE TO BATTLE GIANT MUTATED SPIDERS TO SAVE THEIR SMALL MINING TOWN. WE COULDN'T HAVE BEEN HAPPIER WITH THE RESULT.

HERE WE PRESENT A UNIQUE VERSION OF OUR STORY TOLD IN THE WAY ONLY A GRAPHIC NOVEL CAN TELL IT. THE WONDERFUL ARTISTS WHO WORKED INTENSELY ON THIS BOOK HAVE CAPTURED THE DARKER, SATIRICAL SIDE OF THIS STORY. THEY'VE PRESENTED IMAGES IN A WAY THAT YOU NEVER COULD ON FILM AND FOR THAT WE'RE DEEPLY GRATEFUL.

I HOPE YOU ENJOY THIS GRAPHIC NOVEL AND THE STORY OF ***EIGHT LEGGED FREAKS.***

— DEAN DEVLIN

DO YOU KNOW *FEAR?* WHAT IT'S LIKE TO FEEL YOUR *HEART* BEATING IN YOUR THROAT SO INTENSELY THAT YOU CAN'T BREATHE?
THIS IS A STORY ABOUT *CREATURES, MONSTERS,* HIDEOUS *NIGHTMARES* THAT CRAWL IN THE NIGHT.
I'VE SEEN THEM, IN VISIONS, AND *YOU* WILL, TOO.

PROSPERITY, ARIZONA.
WHEN THEY OPENED THE *MALL* IT WAS THE LAST TIME ANYTHING *IMPORTANT* HAPPENED HERE. EVERYONE PARTIED AND SHOPPED, ATE THEIR SARA LEE POUND CAKES AND DRANK THEIR DR. PEPPERS, THEN WENT HOME AND PRETTY MUCH FORGOT THE TOWN EVER HAD A MALL.
ROY'S VIDEO
I DON'T THINK THOSE OF US WHO'VE *SURVIVED* SO FAR ARE LIKELY TO FORGET IT AGAIN.

WHICH BRINGS US TO THE SPIDERS... THEY'RE EVERYWHERE. THEY CONTROL THE TOWN, FROM THE TEXACO STATION TO THE NORTH TO THE WAL-MART TO THE SOUTH.
I DON'T WANT TO THINK ABOUT THE DEAD. OR THAT IT'S MY JOB AS SHERIFF TO KEEP THE TOWN SAFE. BUT THIS... THIS ISN'T LIKE CALMING DOWN A FEW DRUNK KIDS ON SATURDAY NIGHT.
STILL, WHEN THEY ELECTED SAM PARKER SHERIFF, THEY EXPECTED ME TO ACT THE PART.
C'MON, YOU EIGHT LEGGED FREAKS! LET'S SEE WHAT YOU'RE MADE OF.
WELL, A GIRL'S GOTTA DO WHAT A GIRL'S GOTTA DO.

THAT'S RIGHT. BACK OFF. AND KEEP BACKING OFF.
WHO AM I KIDDING?
MY RIFLE BARELY MAKES A DENT IN THESE THINGS.
DAMN VIROANOL. AND DAMN YOU, WADE, YOU GREEDY LITTLE LEECH. I'LL DIE BEFORE LETTING YOU DESTROY THIS TOWN.
HOW THE HELL DID THIS ALL BEGIN?
I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE SAYING TO YOURSELF; WHAT THE HELL IS A FINE, ENLIGHTENED BROTHER LIKE ME, YOUR HOST, HARLAN GRIFFITH...
...DOING IN THIS GODFORSAKEN LANDSCAPE?

}YAWNNN{ KEEP TALKING, BUDDY. SAY SOMETHING THAT HAS CAFFEINE IN IT.

IT'S "THE TRUTH" WHAT BROUGHT ME OUT HERE BECAUSE THIS IS THE ONLY PLACE LEFT IN THE COUNTRY...

...WHERE I CAN TELL YOU THE TRUTH AND THEY CAN'T GET ME.
THAT'S RIGHT, MY PEOPLE, KFRE FREEDOM RADIO...
OH, CRAP--
...RIGHT HERE IN BEAUTIFUL PROSPERITY, ARIZONA.
YAAAHHHHH
FAR ENOUGH AWAY FROM THE FORCES OF REPRESSION WHO WANT TO KEEP THIS VITAL INFORMATION FROM YOU.
SKREEECCHHHH
INFORMATION THAT YOU NEED TO BE A VIGILANT, RESPONSIBLE EARTHLING...
THUMP
THUMP
THUMP
BUT BEFORE I CAN TELL YOU WHICH ALIENS YOU CAN TRUST AND WHICH ONES YOU CAN'T...
...A WORD FROM OUR ONE AND ONLY SPONSOR...
FUUOOOSHHHH

PROSPERITY MALL, 200,000 SQUARE FEET OF PURE SHOPPING PARADISE. SERVING COCHISE COUNTY SINCE 1998.
KRIK
KRIK
KRIK

WE MAY BE BIG, WE MAY BE BUSY, BUT WE ALWAYS MAKE TIME FOR YOU.
}HMMM{ YOU LOOK TASTY. COME TO POPPA.

ONE WEEK LATER...
RAIN OR SHINE OR WIMPY-ASS DRIZZLE LIKE WE GOT NOW, OUR DOORS ARE ALWAYS OPEN.
JOSHUA?
TAFT'S EXOTIC SPIDER FARM

YOU IN HERE, JOSH?
}SQUAWK{ I SEE DEAD PEOPLE. I SEE DEAD PEOPLE }SQUAWK{

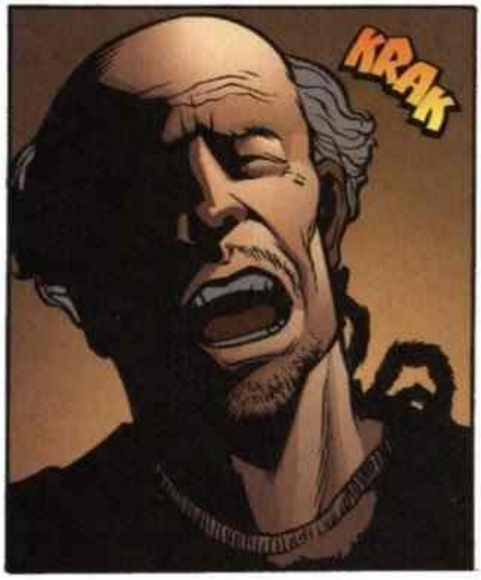
WHOA! TARANTULA!
YOU'RE A BIG FELLA, AREN'T YOU?
CHIK CHIK

SORRY, GUY, BUT NO MATTER HOW MUCH YOU TRY, YOU CAN'T GET OUT.
WHICH IS KINDA A GOOD THING FOR ME, HUH?
SPRINGG
MIKE!
YAAAHHHHH
OH. MAN. JOSHUA. DON'T EVER DO THAT AGAIN.
HELLO, MIKE. SKITTISH TODAY?
NAH! I THOUGHT ONE OF 'EM ESCAPED AGAIN. THE LYCOSA NARBONENSES LOOK DIFFERENT TODAY. BIGGER.
ARE THEY NEW?
NO. IT'S JUST THEIR DIET. I'VE MADE A DISCOVERY, MIKE.
THAT TRAPDOOR SPIDER'S HUGE.
IT'S THE CRICKETS I'VE BEEN GIVING THEM. THEY BEGAN APPEARING IN THE POND A FEW DAYS AGO.
WATCH.
THEY'RE LIKE SPIDER STEROIDS.

I'VE FED THEM TO SEVERAL DIFFERENT SPECIES AND IT'S ALWAYS THE SAME.
THEY START GROWING ALMOST IMMEDIATELY. AND THEIR ENERGY LEVEL INCREASES PROPORTIONALLY.
MAN, HE WAS HUNGRY.
THAT'S ANOTHER THING. AS THEY GROW, SO DO THEIR APPETITES.
I'VE NEVER SEEN SPIDERS THIS BIG.
NO ONE HAS. I'M GOING TO MAKE A FORTUNE.
SPITTING SPIDERS, JUMPING SPIDERS...YOU'VE EVEN GOT ORB WEAVERS.
WHEN DID YOU GET 'EM?
TOOK ME FOREVER. HELL, I MUST'VE BRIBED EVERY CUSTOMS AGENT FROM SANTIAGO TO TUSCON.
MALE ORB WEAVERS COMPETE FOR THE FEMALE'S ATTENTION
THEY COCOON THEIR PREY ALIVE SO SHE CAN EAT THEM IN HER NEST. YOU KNOW HOW WOMEN LOVE BREAKFAST IN BED.
BY THE WAY, SAY HELLO TO "CONSUELA."
THE FEMALE OF THE SPECIES IS THREE TIMES BIGGER THAN THE MALE. SHE FILLS HER PREY WITH DIGESTIVE ACID TO LIQUEFY ITS INTERNAL ORGANS.

THAT WAY SHE CAN *DRINK* IT FROM THE INSIDE OUT...WHILE IT'S STILL *ALIVE*. IT'S WONDERFUL.
AND YOU WONDER WHY MY *MOM* DOESN'T LIKE ME HANGING OUT WITH YOU.
OH, MAN--MY MOM! I AM SO IN *TROUBLE*.

JOSHUA, I GOTTA GO. I'LL CALL YA *SOON*.
YOU TAKE *CARE* OF YOURSELF, MIKE.
}SQUAWK{ I SEE DEAD PEOPLE. I SEE DEAD PEOPLE }SQUAWK{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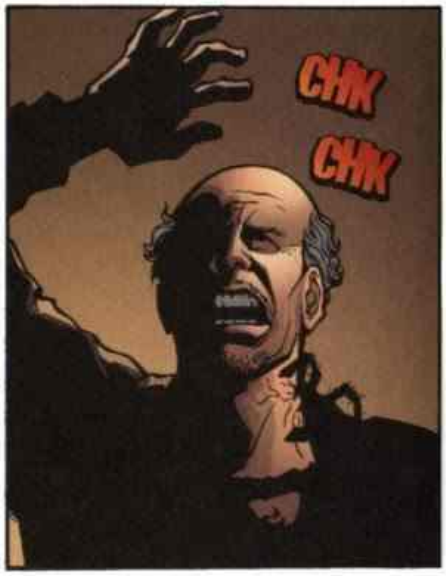
CHK
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SKRASHH

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CHK
THANK GOD WE NEVER HEARD HIS SCREAM.

I *HEAR* THEM: ON THE ROOFS STARING *DOWN* AT ME LIKE I WAS THEIR PERSONAL THANKSGIVING DAY FEAST...

...BEHIND THE WALLS, FEEDING ON *THINGS* I'D RATHER NOT THINK ABOUT...

...TUNNELING BELOW MY FEET, WAITING FOR MY ATTENTION TO TURN ELSEWHERE IF ONLY FOR AN *INSTANT*.

LOOK, WE'RE THREE MONTHS FROM A GOING OUT OF BUSINESS SALE. UNDERSTAND, SONNY?
IT'S NOT SONNY. IT'S CHRIS.
THAT'S GREAT, SONNY...
CHRIS?

CHRIS?!? DAMN MY EYES.
THEY'RE BEAUTIFUL AS EVER, AUNT GLADYS.

LULU? MAN, I MISSED YOU, TOO, GIRL. HEY! NO SCRATCHING!
WOOF
WOOF

SHE'S MAD AS HELL AT YOU, TOO, BOY. WHERE THE HELL WERE YOU? MISSING YOUR OWN FATHER'S FUNERAL.
I--I...I WANTED TO COME BACK, BUT IT WASN'T POSSIBLE.

THAT'S A CROCK OF BULL, AN' YOU KNOW IT, BOY. HE WAS YOUR FATHER. AND HE LOVED YOU.

I...I COULDN'T. I WAS IN SUMATRA...DOING WORK FOR THAT COPPER MINE...
AND THAT WAS MORE IMPORTANT THAN YOUR FATHER?
AUNT GLADYS...

WHEN I GOT YOUR TELEGRAM I TRIED TO GET HOME. BUT I MISSED THE CONNECTION IN DJAKARTA.
IT WAS A GREAT TURNOUT.

LEON.
THE WHOLE TOWN WAS THERE FOR YOUR DAD, CHRIS.
SNIFF SNIFF IS THAT--?
YEP, THE METHANE GAS.

THAT'S WHAT KILLED HIM?
HEY, WE ALL KNOW THE JOB'S DANGEROUS.

BUT YOU KNOW HIM...HE INSISTED ON GOING DOWN THERE BY HIMSELF. HE WAS SURE HE WAS RIGHT ON TOP OF THE BIG ONE.
IT WAS WEEKS BEFORE WE REALIZED WHAT IT WAS DOING TO HIM.

DID HE ASK FOR ME?
IN THE END, ALL HE EVER DID WAS TALK ABOUT HIS SON, THE ENGINEER. KEPT EVERY ONE OF YOUR POSTCARDS.
JUST PROUD AS HELL.

I'M GLAD YOU'RE BACK, CHRIS. THE MEETING'S TONIGHT, YOU KNOW. THEY'RE ALL EXPECTING YOU TO SELL THE MINE.
I KNOW.

YOU'RE NOT. ARE YOU?
I HEARD SCREAMS FROM THE NEXT BLOCK OVER.

DAMN IT. I TOLD EVERYONE TO GET TO THE MALL.
MOM!
MIKE? OH, MY GOD.

MIKE KNEW. HE WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO DID. IF ONLY WE LISTENED. IF ONLY...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? GET OUT. GO!
MOM, YOU GOTTA COME. YOU CAN'T STOP THEM WITH A RIFLE.

DON'T ARGUE WITH ME, MIKE. GET TO THE DAMN MALL NOW!
I FELT IT EVEN BEFORE I HEARD IT.
I WAS ALREADY GOOD AS DEAD...

ITS EYES WERE BLACK AS HELL.
ITS SCREAM DUG DEEP INTO MY HEAD AND RIPPED AT MY EYES FROM THE INSIDE OUT.
I STARED AT ITS OPEN MAW, ITS SOUR BREATH FORCING ITS WAY DOWN INTO MY LUNGS...
...AND THEN, SOMETHING INSIDE ME SNAPPED.
SKRAAACCHHHKKKKKK
SUDDENLY, I WASN'T GOING TO GIVE IT THE SATISFACTION OF TURNING ME INTO SOME GODDAM DESSERT.
I'M THE ONLY THING STANDING BETWEEN YOU AND THE REST OF PROSPERITY, AREN'T I?
WELL, GET THIS STRAIGHT, YOU HAIRY BEAST FROM HELL--
KLIK
KA-BAMM!
THIS IS MY TOWN AND YOU'RE NOT WELCOME HERE!

OH, MAN. OH, GOD. OH, GOD.
SIX DAYS AND OUR ENTIRE WORLD HAS *CHANGED*. I SHOULDN'T BE SURPRISED.

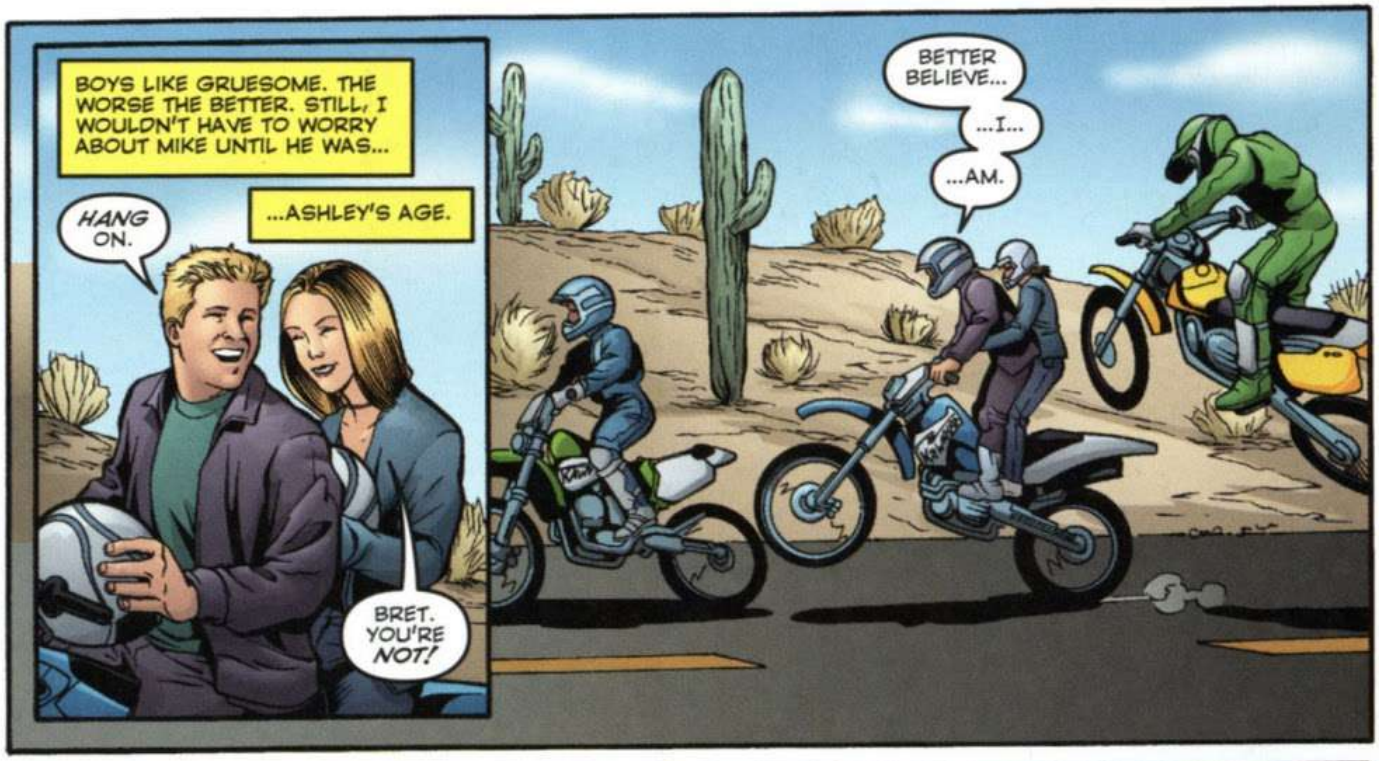
GOD MADE THE WORLD IN SIX DAYS. WHY SHOULDN'T THESE THINGS BE ABLE TO *DESTROY* IT ON THAT SAME TIMETABLE?
HEY. WHAT'RE YOU GUYS DOING OUT HERE?
NO, THE QUESTION IS, WHAT ARE *YOU* DOING OUT HERE? YOU SHOULD BE DOING YOUR *HOMEWORK*.
SHERIFF
AW, MOM. JUST RIDING AROUND. THAT'S ALL.

THIS BARREL IS *HEAVY*. I COULD USE A HAND, SHERIFF.
YOU'LL BE *FINE*, PETE. JUST PUT A LITTLE *SHOULDER* IN IT.

SO. WHAT DID YOU FIND?
OH, SOME *JERK* TOSSED A BARREL FILLED WITH *CHEMICALS* OFF THE ROAD. WHO KNOWS HOW MUCH *CONTAMINATION* IT'S CAUSED.

PETE, SEND THE SAMPLES TO THE E.P.A. LET'S SEE WHAT THEY COME UP WITH.
OH, MAN, I'VE GOT TO TELL JOSHUA...
JOSHUA? OKAY, MISTER, YOU'RE GROUNDED.

BUT MOM...THE CONTAMINATION. HE'S GOT THESE...
MIKE, THAT'S ENOUGH. I TOLD YOU I DON'T WANT YOU HANGING AROUND THERE.
}GRUMBLE{ THAT'S NOT FAIR.


BOYS LIKE GRUESOME. THE WORSE THE BETTER. STILL, I WOULDN'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT MIKE UNTIL HE WAS...
...ASHLEY'S AGE.
HANG ON.
BRET. YOU'RE NOT!
BETTER BELIEVE...
...I...
...AM.

ASHLEY!
YES! GET HER!
I HEARD THAT. QUIET...

WEEE-OOOOO
WEEE-OOOOO
WEEE-OOOOO
...AND HOLD ON TIGHT!

OH, CRAP.
PARTY'S OVER, PEOPLE.

THERE IS SOMETHING VERY *SEXY* ABOUT AN OLDER WOMAN IN *UNIFORM*.
FUNNY, BRET. HERE'S *ANOTHER* LAUGH. YOU'VE JUST BOUGHT YOURSELF A *RECKLESS*.

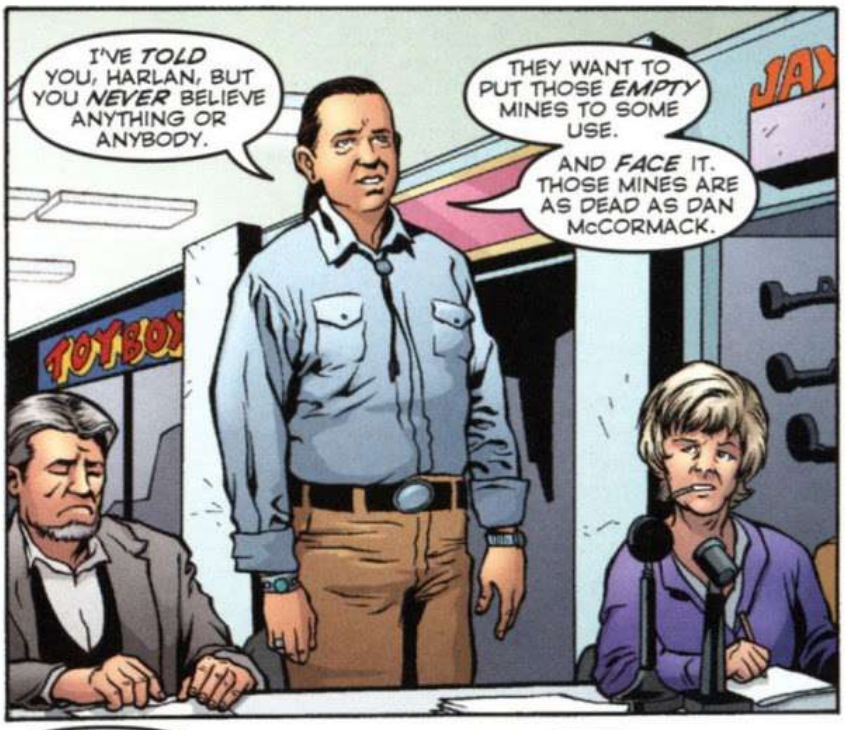
C'MON SHERIFF. YOU KNOW MY STEPFATHER'S THE *MAYOR*. SIGNS YOUR *PAY-CHECK*, REMEMBER?
THE *NEXT* TIME YOU PUT MY *DAUGHTER'S* LIFE IN DANGER...

...I'LL *SHOW* YOU EXACTLY HOW *LITTLE* THAT MEANS TO ME.
ASHLEY, IN THE CAR. BRET, LARRY, DON'T LET ME CATCH YOU *RACING* AGAIN.
NOW *GO!*

BRET'S FATHER IS WADE. I KNEW I'D BE *DEALING* WITH HIM LATER THAT NIGHT AT THE MEETING.
WADE, WHY CAN'T *THOSE* OF US WHO WANT TO SELL, SELL?
BECAUSE, FLOYD, VIROANOL WANTS *ALL* OUR PROPERTIES OR *NONE* AT ALL. NEXT? HARLAN?
SPORT
WE GOT YOUR BALLS
HARPER MUSIC
CD's

FIRST, HOW DO WE KNOW THIS ISN'T ANOTHER OF YOUR *GET RICH* SCHEMES LIKE YOUR BLAMED *OSTRICH FARM?*
AN' TWO, HOW DO WE KNOW THIS ISN'T JUST ANOTHER *GOVERNMENT* COVER-UP?
11oz
CAT

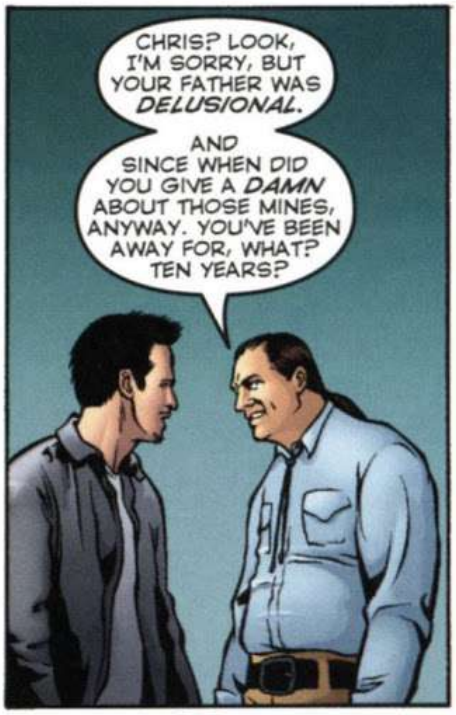
COVER-UP? HARLAN, WHAT THE *HELL* ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
WHY WOULD *VIROANOL* PONY UP ALL THIS MONEY? AND WHAT DO THEY WANT WITH A DEAD TOWN ANYWAY?


I'VE TOLD YOU, HARLAN, BUT YOU NEVER BELIEVE ANYTHING OR ANYBODY.
THEY WANT TO PUT THOSE EMPTY MINES TO SOME USE.
AND FACE IT. THOSE MINES ARE AS DEAD AS DAN McCORMACK.
TOYBOX

THAT'S NOT FAIR, WADE. DAN SAID HE SAW THE MOTHERLODE.
DAN SAID A LOT OF THINGS NEAR THE END, LEON.

GOD REST HIS SOUL, BUT HE WAS HALLUCINATING BEFORE HE DIED.
THOSE MINES ARE FILLED WITH METHANE GAS AND YOU WANT TO LOAD THAT GUN WITH BARRELS OF TOXIC WASTE?

SORRY, THIS IS FOR LAND OWNERS ONLY.
IT'S ME. CHRIS McCORMACK. AND IF MY OLD MAN THOUGHT HE FOUND THE AQUA MESA LODE, THEN I BELIEVE HIM.

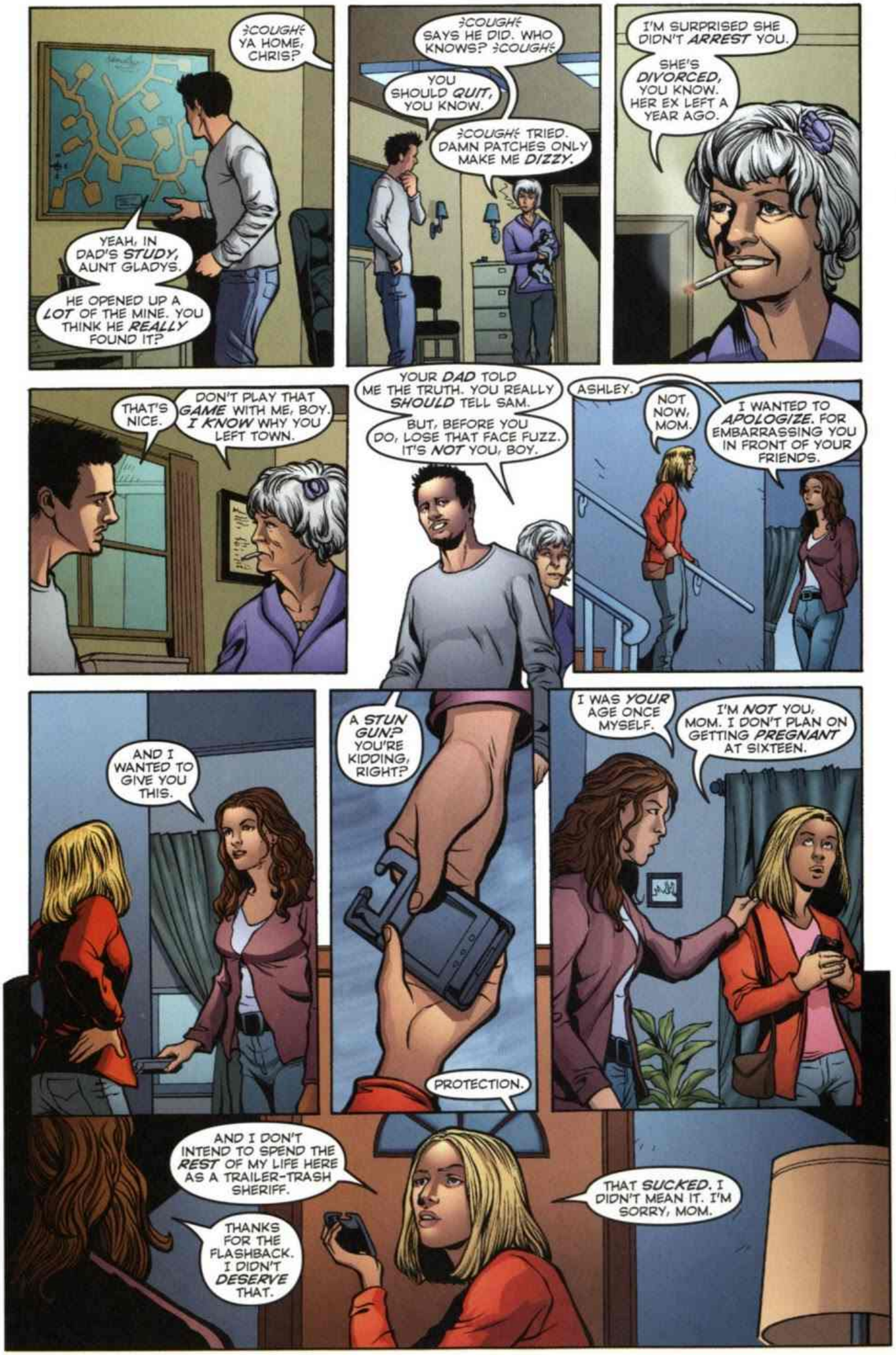

CHRIS? LOOK, I'M SORRY, BUT YOUR FATHER WAS DELUSIONAL.
AND SINCE WHEN DID YOU GIVE A DAMN ABOUT THOSE MINES, ANYWAY. YOU'VE BEEN AWAY FOR, WHAT? TEN YEARS?

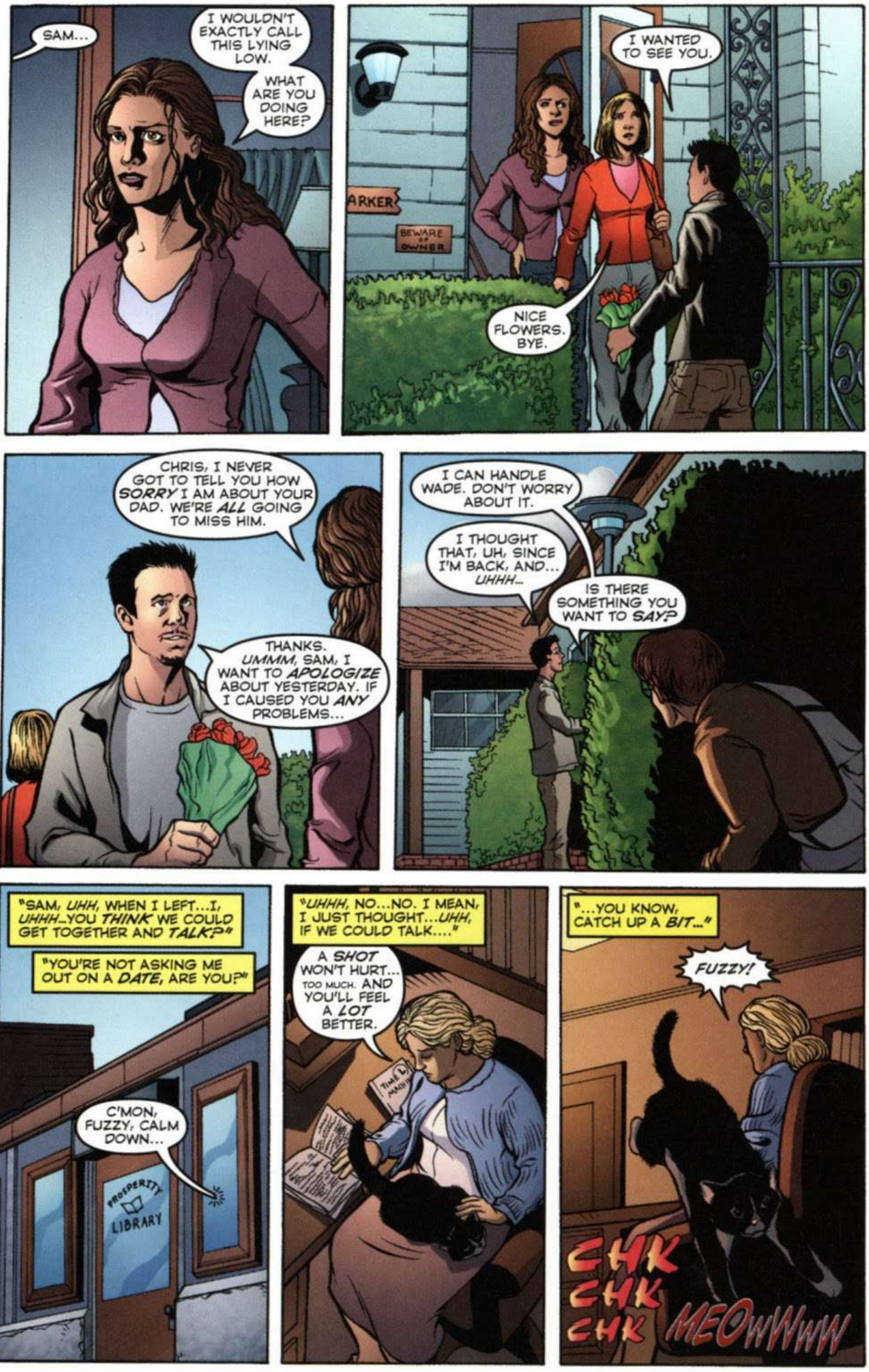
SHUT THE HELL UP ABOUT MY FATHER!
WHAM

CHRIS? I CAN'T BELIEVE... COME WITH ME.
SAM?
SAM, I WANT HIM ARRESTED!

TWELVE YEARS, AND YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED A BIT.
SAM, I--
DON'T. GO HOME. LAY LOW FOR A DAY OR TWO, HUH.

NICE TO KNOW YOU HAVEN'T TURNED GAY AFTER ALL, MOM.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
I SAW YOU LOOKING AT HIS BUTT WHEN YOU CUFFED HIM.
"WHERE DID YOU LEARN THAT IT'S OKAY TO TALK TO YOUR MOTHER LIKE THAT?"
SCUTTY'S SUPER MARKET
FLORIDA ORANGES
5 BAG $4.99
APPLES
DAD, YOU'RE NOT LOOKING GOOD. WHY DON'T YOU GO HOME?
I CAN CLOSE UP BY MYSELF.
I COULD USE SOME SLEEP.
I'VE GOT STOCKING TO DO, THEN I'LL BE RIGHT HOME.
BEANS. BAKED BEANS. REFRIED BEANS. BEAN DIP WITH SALSA. WITHOUT SALSA.
BEANS COMING OUT OF MY--
CHK CHK
HUH?
DON'T TELL ME WE HAVE RATS AGAIN.
WE'LL BE CLOSED DOWN FOR ANOTHER #$%# WEEK.
CHK CHK CHK CHK CHK
YAAAHHHHHHHH
MATT? DID YOU FALL? ARE YOU OKAY?
MATT?
MATT?
WE FOUND JOE AND CHRIS DAVIS DEAD SIX HOURS LATER. WHATEVER IT WAS DEVOURED MOST OF THEM.


}COUGH{ YA HOME, CHRIS?
YEAH, IN DAD'S STUDY, AUNT GLADYS.
HE OPENED UP A LOT OF THE MINE. YOU THINK HE REALLY FOUND IT?
}COUGH{ SAYS HE DID. WHO KNOWS? }COUGH{
YOU SHOULD QUIT, YOU KNOW.
}COUGH{ TRIED. DAMN PATCHES ONLY MAKE ME DIZZY.
I'M SURPRISED SHE DIDN'T ARREST YOU.
SHE'S DIVORCED, YOU KNOW. HER EX LEFT A YEAR AGO.
THAT'S NICE.
DON'T PLAY THAT GAME WITH ME, BOY. I KNOW WHY YOU LEFT TOWN.
YOUR DAD TOLD ME THE TRUTH. YOU REALLY SHOULD TELL SAM.
BUT, BEFORE YOU DO, LOSE THAT FACE FUZZ. IT'S NOT YOU, BOY.
ASHLEY.
NOT NOW, MOM.
I WANTED TO APOLOGIZE. FOR EMBARRASSING YOU IN FRONT OF YOUR FRIENDS.
AND I WANTED TO GIVE YOU THIS.
A STUN GUN? YOU'RE KIDDING, RIGHT?
PROTECTION.
I WAS YOUR AGE ONCE MYSELF.
I'M NOT YOU, MOM. I DON'T PLAN ON GETTING PREGNANT AT SIXTEEN.
AND I DON'T INTEND TO SPEND THE REST OF MY LIFE HERE AS A TRAILER-TRASH SHERIFF.
THANKS FOR THE FLASHBACK. I DIDN'T DESERVE THAT.
THAT SUCKED. I DIDN'T MEAN IT. I'M SORRY, MOM.


SAM...
I WOULDN'T EXACTLY CALL THIS LYING LOW.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
I WANTED TO SEE YOU.
ARKER
BEWARE OF OWNER
NICE FLOWERS. BYE.
CHRIS, I NEVER GOT TO TELL YOU HOW SORRY I AM ABOUT YOUR DAD. WE'RE ALL GOING TO MISS HIM.
THANKS. UMMM, SAM, I WANT TO APOLOGIZE ABOUT YESTERDAY. IF I CAUSED YOU ANY PROBLEMS...
I CAN HANDLE WADE. DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
I THOUGHT THAT, UH, SINCE I'M BACK, AND... UHHH...
IS THERE SOMETHING YOU WANT TO SAY?
"SAM, UHH, WHEN I LEFT...I, UHHH...YOU THINK WE COULD GET TOGETHER AND TALK?"
"YOU'RE NOT ASKING ME OUT ON A DATE, ARE YOU?"
C'MON, FUZZY, CALM DOWN...
PROSPERITY LIBRARY
"UHHH, NO...NO. I MEAN, I JUST THOUGHT...UHH, IF WE COULD TALK...."
A SHOT WON'T HURT... TOO MUCH. AND YOU'LL FEEL A LOT BETTER.
"...YOU KNOW, CATCH UP A BIT..."
FUZZY!
CHK CHK CHK MEOWWWW

FUZZY? WHAT'S WRONG, GIRL?
CHK CHK CHK
"SURE, CHRIS. WE COULD DO THAT."

CHK CHK CHK
CHK CHK CHK
"GREAT. WELL, OKAY. I'LL, UHH, BE IN, UHH, TOUCH. BYE."

MEROWWWW
FUZZY?

WHERE ARE YOU, GIRL--

OH, GOO...

CHK CHK
CHK CHK CHK
YYAAHHHHHHHHHH
SWUKKK
CHK CHK CHK CHK

HELLO? JOSHUA? CHARLIE?
I CAN DO THIS. I CAN DO THIS.

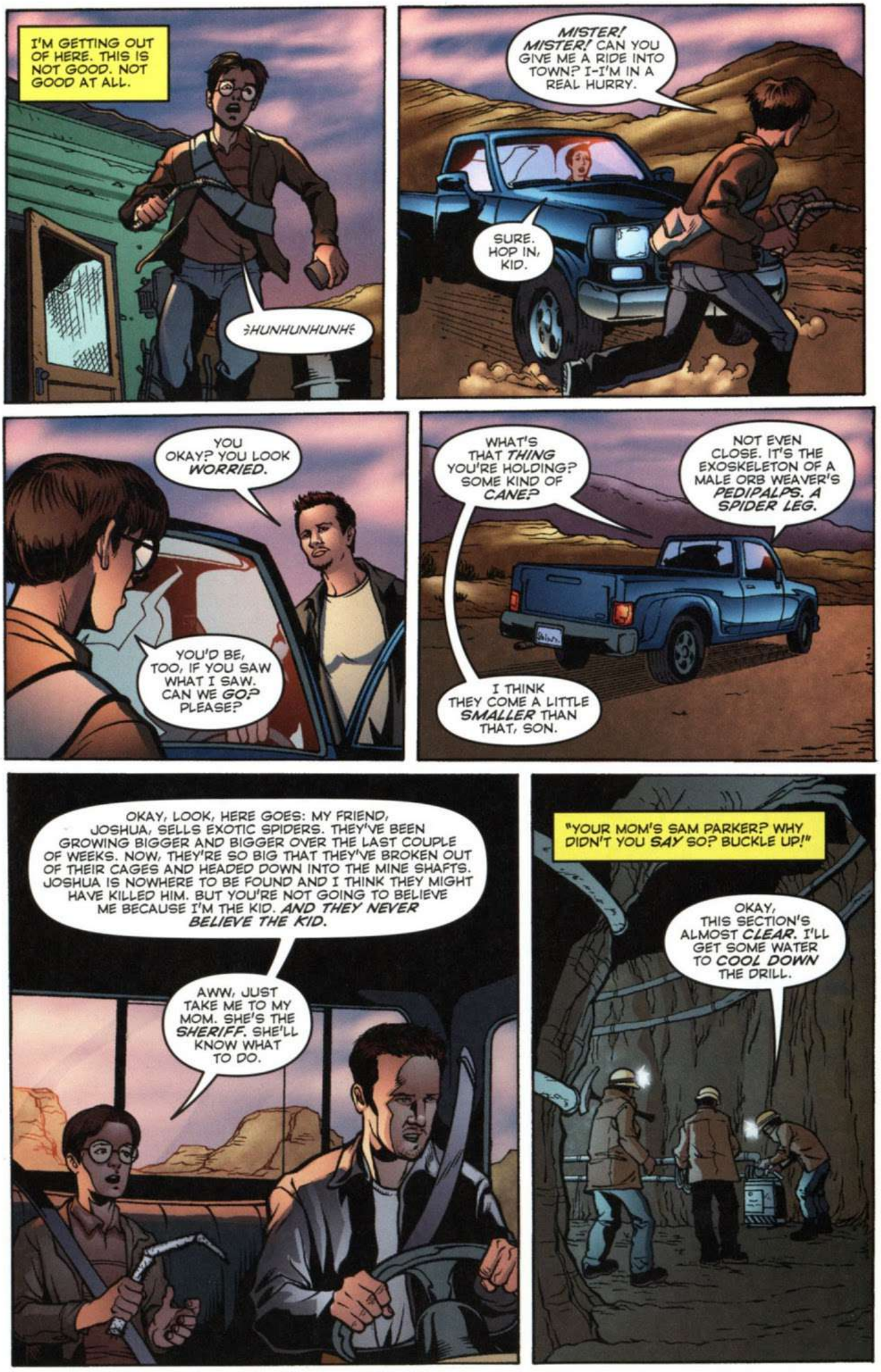
OH, GOD.

JOSHUA.
CALM DOWN. CALM DOWN. I CAN DO THIS. THINK. THINK.
TAKE OUT YOUR *PDA*. MAKE NOTES. BE THOROUGH. PEOPLE NEED TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENED HERE.

AHEM. THIS IS *MIKE PARKER*. I AM AT JOSHUA'S EXOTIC SPIDER FARM. THERE IS *NO* SIGN OF JOSHUA, HIS PARROT, OR ANY OF THE *ARACHNIDS* INSIDE THE HOUSE.
BUT THERE ARE HUGE SPIDER *TRACKS* LEADING OUTSIDE.

I'VE FOUND A SPIDER *LEG*. FROM MY INITIAL MEASUREMENTS THEY HAVE AT LEAST DOUBLED--NO, *TRIPLED* IN SIZE.

KEEP OUT
IT ALSO APPEARS THEY *DRAGGED* SOMETHING HEAVY TOWARD THE MINING *ENTRANCE* BEHIND THE HOUSE.
UH OH


I'M GETTING OUT OF HERE. THIS IS NOT GOOD. NOT GOOD AT ALL.
HUNHUNHUNH
MISTER! MISTER! CAN YOU GIVE ME A RIDE INTO TOWN? I-I'M IN A REAL HURRY.
SURE. HOP IN, KID.
YOU OKAY? YOU LOOK WORRIED.
YOU'D BE, TOO, IF YOU SAW WHAT I SAW. CAN WE GO? PLEASE?
WHAT'S THAT THING YOU'RE HOLDING? SOME KIND OF CANE?
NOT EVEN CLOSE. IT'S THE EXOSKELETON OF A MALE ORB WEAVER'S PEDIPALPS. A SPIDER LEG.
I THINK THEY COME A LITTLE SMALLER THAN THAT, SON.
OKAY, LOOK, HERE GOES: MY FRIEND, JOSHUA, SELLS EXOTIC SPIDERS. THEY'VE BEEN GROWING BIGGER AND BIGGER OVER THE LAST COUPLE OF WEEKS. NOW, THEY'RE SO BIG THAT THEY'VE BROKEN OUT OF THEIR CAGES AND HEADED DOWN INTO THE MINE SHAFTS. JOSHUA IS NOWHERE TO BE FOUND AND I THINK THEY MIGHT HAVE KILLED HIM. BUT YOU'RE NOT GOING TO BELIEVE ME BECAUSE I'M THE KID. AND THEY NEVER BELIEVE THE KID.
AWW, JUST TAKE ME TO MY MOM. SHE'S THE SHERIFF. SHE'LL KNOW WHAT TO DO.
"YOUR MOM'S SAM PARKER? WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY SO? BUCKLE UP!"
OKAY, THIS SECTION'S ALMOST CLEAR. I'LL GET SOME WATER TO COOL DOWN THE DRILL.

LEON, SOMETHING'S BLOCKING THE HOSE.
SO, SUCK IT OUT.

GIVE ME THAT. YOU GETTING SQUEAMISH ALL OF A SUDDEN?
I DON'T KNOW. THAT SMELL...AND YOU HEAR THAT SCURRYING? DOESN'T SOUND LIKE ANY RATS I'VE EVER HEARD.

SOMETHING'S WRONG. I DON'T LIKE IT. MAYBE WE SHOULD GET OUT.
WE DON'T QUIT TILL WE'RE DONE. OKAY. SUCKING IT--

GAKK
OH, GOD!
LEON?!?

GET OUT! GET OUT!
RUN!

YAAAGHHHHHHHHH

IT WAS A REAL PLEASURE TALKING TO YOU, MISTER.
LIKEWISE. MY NAME IS CHRIS.
MIKE. I SAW YOU PUNCH THE MAYOR. THAT WAS COOL.
NO. IT WASN'T A VERY SMART WAY OF EXPRESSING MYSELF. BUT THAT MAN HAS ALWAYS GOTTEN ON MY NERVES.
I'D'VE DECKED HIM, TOO. I'M MOST DEFINITELY AGAINST TOXIC WASTE.
LOOK, IF YOU'RE REALLY WORRIED ABOUT YOUR FRIEND, YOU MIGHT WANT TO TELL YOUR MOM AND TAKE THE HEAT.
YOU LIKE MY MOM, DON'T YOU?
HEY! I'M NOT BLIND.
CAUSE I THINK SHE MIGHT ACTUALLY LIKE YOU, TOO. BUT YOU MIGHT CONSIDER LOSING THE FACIAL HAIR.
YOU'RE TOO OLD TO BE A BACKSTREET BOY.
UHHH, RIGHT. SEE YOU AROUND, MIKE.
"AND DON'T WORRY ABOUT DECKING WADE. HE DESERVED IT."
YEAH. I THOUGHT IT WAS A SLAM DUNK, TOO. WHO KNEW MCCORMACK WOULD SUDDENLY GET GOLD FEVER.
WADE, I'M GOING OUT NOW.
LOOK, I LET YOU GUYS RUN TESTS, PUTTING THAT STUFF IN THE MINES THAT RUN UNDER MY PROPERTY.
WE'RE GOING TO RAPE SOME SHEEP AND RUSTLE SOME CATTLE.
BRET, I'M ON THE PHONE. GO HAVE FUN.

NOW LOOK, YOU NEARLY BLEW THIS WHOLE THING. LEAVING A BARREL OUT IN THE OPEN FOR ANYONE TO FIND.
THAT WAS CARELESS.
THWIPPP
KRK KRK KRK

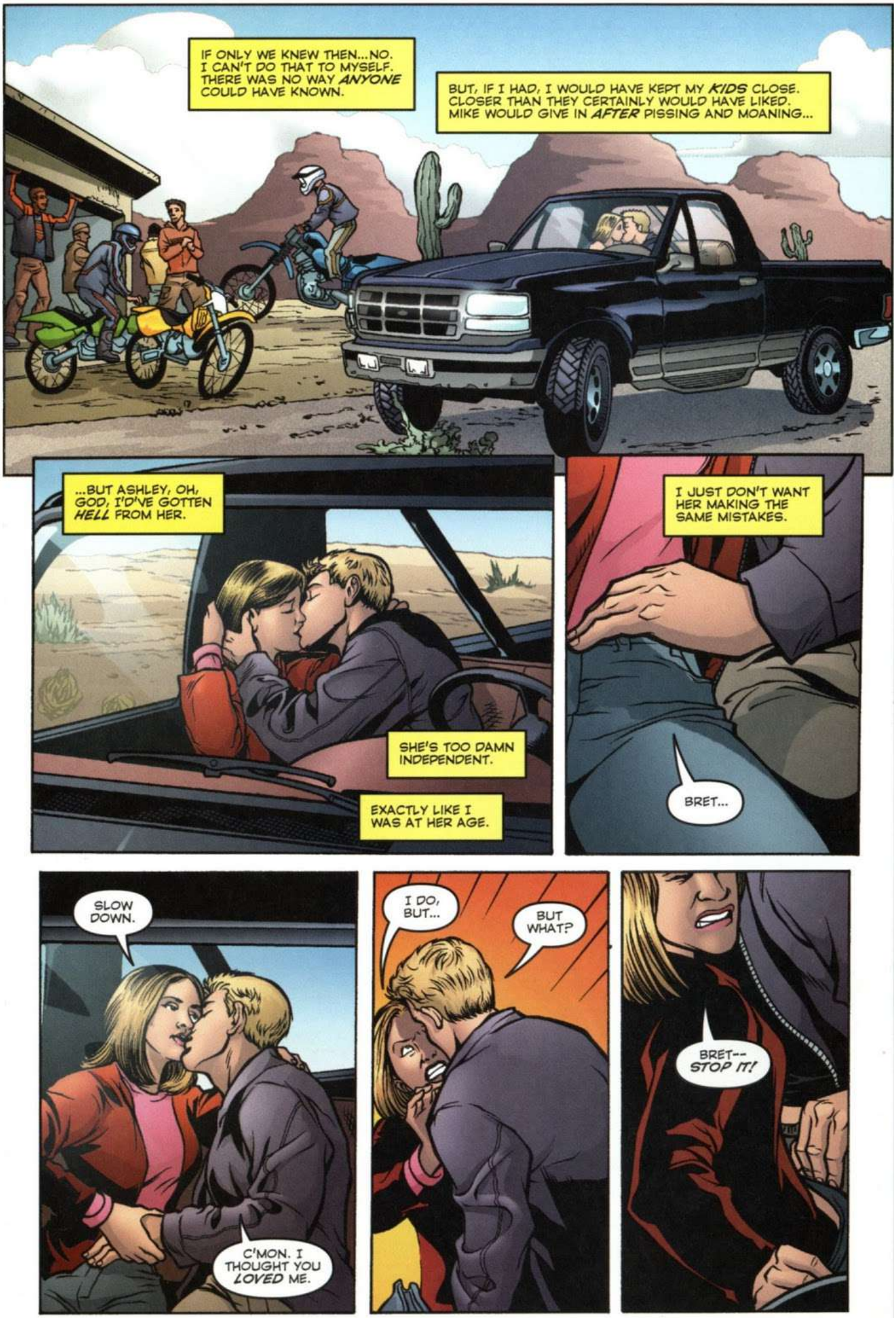
I'VE DONE WHAT YOU ASKED. NOW YOU OWE ME ON THIS.
AND BE CAREFUL, WILL YOU? KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN. YOU GOT TO PAY ATTENTION OR THIS'LL ALL FALL APART.

I'VE BEEN WARNING YOU ABOUT THIS FOR YEARS NOW AND NOW WE'RE SEEING IT EMERGE IN OUR VERY OWN TOWN.
I'M SCANNING THE POLICE CALLS AND I SEE THAT BOB STUCK'S DOG, SKIPPY, IS MISSING.

THAT'S ALREADY THE FOURTH MISSING PET CALL TONIGHT. SOME SUSPECT COYOTES, WOLVES...
KRK KRK

WE ALL NOW WHAT HAPPENS TO COWS IN NEW ENGLAND AND OTHER PLACES ALL OVER AMERICA...
KRK KRK
KRK KRK

THE ANIMAL MUTILATORS ARE THE SHOCK TROOPS OF MOST ALIEN EXPEDITIONS. WHY? ONLY THEY KNOW...
TWIIIIPPP
BUT WE CAN CERTAINLY GUESS, MY FRIENDS. WE CAN CERTAINLY GUESS.


IF ONLY WE KNEW THEN...NO. I CAN'T DO THAT TO MYSELF. THERE WAS NO WAY ANYONE COULD HAVE KNOWN.
BUT, IF I HAD, I WOULD HAVE KEPT MY KIDS CLOSE. CLOSER THAN THEY CERTAINLY WOULD HAVE LIKED. MIKE WOULD GIVE IN AFTER PISSING AND MOANING...
...BUT ASHLEY, OH, GOD, I'D'VE GOTTEN HELL FROM HER.
SHE'S TOO DAMN INDEPENDENT.
EXACTLY LIKE I WAS AT HER AGE.
I JUST DON'T WANT HER MAKING THE SAME MISTAKES.
BRET...
SLOW DOWN.
C'MON. I THOUGHT YOU LOVED ME.
I DO, BUT...
BUT WHAT?
BRET-- STOP IT!

I JUST DON'T INTEND TO LOSE MY VIRGINITY IN THE FRONT SEAT OF A TRUCK.
I'VE GOT A BLANKET IN THE BACK.
NO! I'M NOT READY FOR THIS.
TAMMY AND LARRY DO IT EVERY NIGHT.
I SAID NO. BACK OFF. I'M WARNING YOU.
THEN MAYBE THIS'LL MAKE YOU HOWL.
SLAKAKAK
I CAN'T HELP IT. YOU BRING OUT THE BEAST IN ME.
YAAAHHHHH! MY BA-- OUCHHH!!
I CAN'T BELIEVE MY MOM WAS RIGHT ABOUT YOU. DO YOU KNOW HOW EMBARRASSING THAT IS?
ASHLEY ⁑OH GOD⁑ ASHLEY! ⁑OUCH⁑
HEY! CHECK OUT BRET.
DUDE, DID YOU PISS IN YOUR PANTS?

KNOCK IT OFF, JERKOFF. THIS ISN'T FUNNY. I COULD'VE BEEN--
OH, MY GOD.
WHAT'RE YOU CRYIN' 'BOUT NOW, BABY?
RUN!
HUH?
RAAGGHHHHHH
KRK KRK KRK

GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE!
ohman ohman ohman ohman
KRK KRK KRK KRK
THOSE POOR KIDS. IT WAS SO SUDDEN. AND SO HORRIBLY, HORRIBLY VIOLENT.

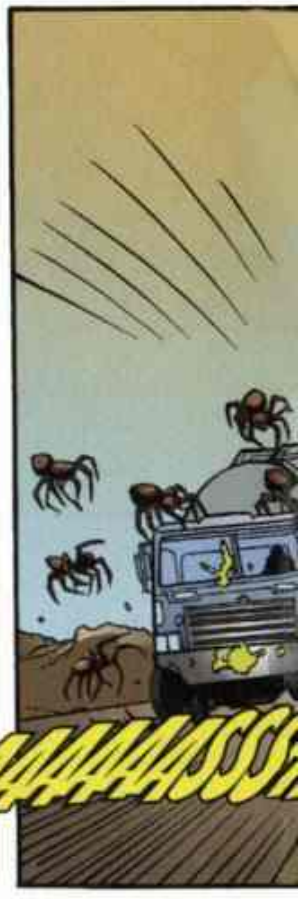
KRK KRK KRK KRK

AND EVEN NOW, AS I HEAR THOSE DAMN THINGS SCRATCHING BEHIND THE WALLS AND DIGGING BENEATH MY FEET, I KEEP ASKING MYSELF ONE UNANSWERABLE QUESTION...
...HOW IN GOD'S NAME CAN WE HOPE TO SURVIVE?
KRK KRK KRK KRK KRK

KRK
KRK
KRK
KRK
KRK
KRK
KRK
KRK

HELL, THE FACT IS, YOU PRETTY MUCH KNOW WHAT YOUR *WHOLE* LIFE WAS GOING TO BE.
PROSPERITY IS BORING. BUT IT'S *HOME*.

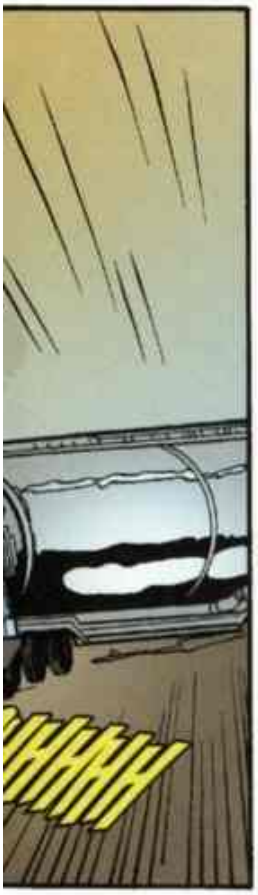
NO...NO...
SKKKRRRAAAAAAAAAAAAAAASSSH



PROSPERITY WAS NEVER A PLACE ONE BRAGGED ABOUT. IT DIDN'T BUSTLE WITH LIFE OR SHOUT THAT IT WAS ANYTHING MORE THAN A PIT STOP IN THE MIDDLE OF AN ENDLESS DESERT...

...BUT AT LEAST WE THOUGHT WE WERE *SAFE* HERE.

THIS IS THE KIND OF PLACE THAT WHEN YOU'RE *BORN* YOU ALREADY KNOW EVERYONE'S NAME.



THE MINES.
SO MANY TUNNELS...THEY'LL NEVER FIND ME HERE.
KRK KRK KRK KRK
SPAKKK
THANK GOD FOR ROTTED-OUT SUPPORT POLES!
RRUMMBOOOMMM
SKRRAAWWWWWW
YEAH, YEAH! YOU'RE DEAD MEAT, BABY. WHO'S THE MAN? BRING IT ON, YOU @#$%$ EIGHT-LEGGED MONSTER!
KRK KRK KRK KRK
GULP
I BETTER GO.
PUT ME DOWN!

CHK
CHK
DON'T YOU HEAR ME? I SAID--
--PUT ME DOWN!
CHK
CHK
CHK
CHK
HOME.
I DIDN'T KNOW THEN HOW MY TOWN WAS BEING TORN APART.
I COULDN'T KNOW THEN HOW MUCH WORSE IT WAS GOING TO GET.
ASHLEY? I DIDN'T EXPECT YOU BACK SO SOON.
ASHLEY?
Visions
ASHLEY?

AUNT GLADYS?
WHERE ARE YOU? WHAT HAPPENED TO THE LIGHTS?
AUNT GLADYS?
KLIK
AUNT GLADYS?

OH, MY GOD.
"CHRIS? WHAT'S WRONG? YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'VE SEEN A GHOST."
"SAM, CAN I SPEAK TO MIKE? PLEASE. HURRY."
"RIGHT HERE, CHRIS. WHAT'S UP?"
"I FOUND THIS IN MY BASEMENT."
"WHOA! THAT'S HUGE. LET ME CHECK THIS OUT."
"WILL SOMEONE TELL ME WHAT'S GOING ON?"
"BASED ON THE EXOSKELETON I FOUND AT JOSHUA'S, THE SPIDERS'VE GROWN AGAIN.
"THIS ONE'S GOT TO BE AT LEAST FIVE FEET TALL."
"SAM, I THINK A GIANT SPIDER ATE AUNT GLADYS."
"MAYBE NOT. WAS THERE WEBBING AROUND?"
"YEAH. LOTS OF IT. WHY?"

"I BELIEVE SHE WAS ATTACKED BY A MALE ORB WEAVER. THEY COCOON THEIR PREY ALIVE FOR THE FEMALES TO FEED ON LATER."
"MIKE, STOP THIS NONSENSE RIGHT--"
YYAAAHHHHHHHHHH
"ASHLEY?"
WOW! A SCYTODES SPITTER!
G-GOD.
MUMBLE

I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT IT WAS AND I DIDN'T CARE. IT WAS TRYING TO KILL ASHLEY.
NOT GOING TO HAPPEN.
MIKE, GET ME THE SCISSORS!
ASHLEY, TRY NOT TO MOVE.
CHRIS-- GOT 'EM.
THROW THEM TO ME.
ASHLEY, I'M GOING TO CUT YOU FR--
DAMN!
THWIPPP
CHRIS!
ƷUNHHHHHHƸ THE WEBBING'S TOO DAMN STRONG.
MIKE, WHERE'S YOUR MOM?
I-I DON'T KNOW. WHY?

U2
I THINK NOW WOULD BE A GOOD TIME TO FIND HER!
I'M HERE, CHRIS.
MOM?
THIS ISN'T GOING TO BE PRETTY. GET BACK, MIKE.
HEY! YOU! YOU HAIRY SON OF A BITCH!

GET AWAY FROM MY DAUGHTER!
SKKRRRAAAWWWWWW
BAM
BAM
BAM
BAM
BAM
DON'T SAY I DIDN'T WARN YOU.
MOM?
MIKE, HELP YOUR SISTER. NOW!
OH MY GOD. OH, MY GOD.
SHE'S A LITTLE GOOEY, BUT OKAY.
SAM, THIS TOWN'S GOT A SERIOUS PROBLEM.
THEN WE'RE GONNA HAVE TO GET A SERIOUS SOLUTION.
I HAVE AN IDEA!

THE PHONE LINES WERE DOWN. THE BASTARDS MUST'VE EATEN THROUGH THEM. SO WE USED HARLAN'S RADIO STATION TO TELL EVERYONE TO GET TO THE MALL.
THAT'S HOW IT BEGAN.
ONLY GOD KNOWS WHERE IT'S ALL GOING TO END.
CHK
CHK
CHK
ROXY
CHK
CHK
CHK
BAM
BAM
BAM
BAM
FOR GOD'S SAKE, WHY ARE YOU PEOPLE OUT HERE? GET TO THE MALL!
IT'S GOT STEEL DOORS. CONCRETE WALLS. THEY CAN'T BREAK IN.
PLEASE-- RUN! OR YOU'LL ALL DIE!
THEY COULDN'T RUN. HELL, ALL MOST OF THEM COULD DO IS STAND THERE WAITING FOR A BLOODY PINCER TO SKEWER THEM THROUGH.

FOR THE PAST *HOUR* ALL I'VE BEEN ABLE TO HEAR ARE THE *SCREAMS*. WILD, CACKLING *SQUEALS* FROM THE CREATURES, PLEAS FOR MERCY FROM MY *FRIENDS*.
I WAS TOO HORRIFIED TO BE AFRAID. TOO OVERWHELMED FOR SELF-PITY. HAD THERE BEEN EVEN A SINGLE MOMENT TO *THINK* ABOUT WHAT WAS HAPPEN...
...I'M FAIRLY CERTAIN I'D GO *INSANE*.
I COULDN'T BLAME THEM. THIS WAS BEYOND COMPREHENSION. DYING WAS EASIER TO ACCEPT.
CHK
GGRRAAAWWWWWWWW
CHK
CHK

C'MON. YOU CAN DO IT. GET INSIDE THE MALL.
I'LL HOLD THEM BACK. I SWEAR.
CHK
CHK
CHK
CHK
I WAS LYING. THERE WERE DOZENS OF SPIDERS.
CHK
CHK
CHK
CHK
CHK
CHK
CHK
AND ALL I HAD LEFT WAS A HANDFUL OF BULLETS.
SKKRAAAWWWWW
BAMMMMM
HURRY.
HURRY.
HURRY.
MALL
NOW THEY WERE COMING FOR ME.
FAT CHANCE.
CHK
CHK
CHK
CHK
CHK
CHK
CHK
WHUMP!
WHAT THE HELL IS THAT THING?
SPIDER, MAN. SAM, ARE YOU OKAY?
NO. BUT I'M A HELLUVA LOT BETTER THAN WHATEVER'S OUT THERE. C'MON. WE NEED THAT PLAN.

HUNHUNHUNHUNHUNH
I DON'T FREAKING BELIEVE IT.
THEY'RE IN EVERY DAMN TUNNEL.
CHK
CHK
CHK
CHK
CHK

I'M GONNA DIE. THEY'RE GONNA CUT ME INTO BRET McMEATSTRIPS AND I'M GONNA DIE.
I'M SORRY, ASHLEY. I'M SO SORRY FOR BEING SUCH A JERK!
VRRRROOOOOOOMM
WE COULD HEAR THEM OUTSIDE, TRYING TO SMASH THROUGH THE STEEL GATE.
BUT ORDINARY SPIDERS DON'T THINK. AND THEY CERTAINLY DON'T CREATE ELABORATE PLOTS FOR REVENGE.
WHAT THE HELL ARE THESE THINGS?
CHK
CHK
CHK
CHK
CHK
CHK
CHK
BAMMMM
BAMMMM

YOU BROUGHT US HERE, SAM. SO, NOW WHAT DO WE DO?
OUR CELL PHONES CAN'T GET PAST THE CONCRETE WALLS.
SHHHHH! EVERYONE NEEDS TO BE QUIET. SPIDERS ARE DRAWN TO SOUND.
THINGS JUST KEEP GETTING BETTER AND BETTER.

WHAT ABOUT THE *ANTENNA* ON THE *ROOF?*
IT'S TALL ENOUGH TO GET MY *BROADCAST* OUT OVER THE MOUNTAINS.
NOT BAD, HARLAN. I COULD *CLIMB* UP AND GET THE SIGNAL OUT.

MOO-OOOOMMMMM!
SAM, THESE PEOPLE *NEED* YOU. SO DO YOUR *CHILDREN.*
I'LL DO IT.
?
YOU'LL NEED BACK-UP. GUESS THAT MEANS *ME.*
YOU *SURE* YOU WANT TO DO THIS, HARLAN?
BEEN FIGHTIN' *ALIENS* MY WHOLE LIFE. 'BOUT TIME I BUSTED A FEW OF 'EM, FACE-TO-FACE.

THE *SPORTS* SHOP AT THE NORTH END OF THE MALL SHOULD HAVE RIFLES AND AMMO. HURRY BACK.
AND, FOR GOD'S SAKE, PEOPLE, BE *QUIET.*

SAM, THERE'S SOMETHING...WHEN I LEFT TOWN...
CHRIS. WAIT! YOU'LL NEED THIS.
MIKE, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

"IT'S PERFUME. SPIDERS ARE LIKE DOGS. THEY'VE GOT A VERY SENSITIVE SENSE OF SMELL. THE PERFUME SHOULD CONFUSE THEM."
"WELL, IF WE'RE GONNA DIE, GUESS WE'RE GONNA DIE SMELLING REAL GOOD."
CLANK CLANK CLANK CLANK
MAN, YOU HEAR THAT? THE TOWER'S REVERBING OUR FOOTSTEPS. IT'S LIKE WE'RE RINGING THE FOOD CHIME!
THEN WE'VE GOT TO WORK FAST.
READY?
NO. BUT NO WAY I'M STAYING HERE BY MYSELF.
DON'T WORRY. THE SPIDERS PROBABLY AREN'T EVEN AWARE WE'RE UP HERE.
CHK CHK
CHK CHK CHK
CHK CHK
CHK CHK
THEN EITHER YOU'RE CRAZY OR YOU'RE BLIND.
LOOK DOWN, BROTHER. THEY'RE WAITING FOR A COURSE OF "BLACK AND WHITE TARTAR."

cHk
cHk
BUT THERE'S NO WAY THEY'RE EATING ME.
NOW, YOU WORK THAT PHONE, BROTHER. I'LL KEEP THESE ALIENS AT BAY.
BLAMM
BLAMM
cHk
cHk
cHk
cHk
NINE ONE ONE EMERGENCY.
cHk
cHk
cHk
cHk
I'M CALLING FROM *PROSPERITY, ARIZONA*. MY NAME'S CHRIS McCORMACK. THIS IS GOING TO SOUND CRAZY, BUT I *SWEAR* IT'S THE *TRUTH*.
THE TOWN IS BEING ATTACKED BY *GIANT SPIDERS*. WE NEED *MILITARY INTERVENTION*.
cHk
cHk
cHk
cHk
cHk
THIS IS *EMERGENCY SERVICES*, NOT DIAL-A-JOKE. ⁝KLIK⁝
HARLAN, THEY DIDN'T BELIEVE ME.
cHk
cHk
cHk
WELCOME TO MY NIGHTMARE. TRUTH DOESN'T SELL, BABY. MAKE SOMETHING UP AND *TRY* AGAIN-- ⁝UH OH⁝
cHk
cHk
COMPANY'S CALLING.
cHk
cHk
HARLAN!
CLIMB!
C'MON UP! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
GIVING YOU A *CHANCE*. DEFEND THE *HUMAN RACE*, BROTHER.
NNOOOOOO!!
cHk
cHk
cHk
cHk
cHk
cHk
cHk
cHk
cHk
cHk
cHk
cHk
cHk
cHk
cHk
BAM
BAM
BAM
BAM
BAM
cHk
cHk
cHk
cHk

WHAM
BAM
MOM. THEY'RE BREAKING THROUGH THE STEEL DOOR. THEY'RE ACTUALLY GETTING STRONGER.
WE'RE WAY TOO MUCH OUT IN THE OPEN HERE.
THERE'S GOT TO BE A PLACE WHERE WE CAN BARRICADE OURSELVES IN.
WADE KNOWS THIS MALL BETTER THAN ANYONE. WHERE IS HE?
I JUST SAW HIM GOING THROUGH THAT DOOR.
OH, MY GOD... HE'S TRYING TO GET OUT THROUGH THE MINES.
A COUPLE OF MONTHS AGO... THERE WAS HEAVY WATER DAMAGE IN THE BASEMENT...
WE BROKE THROUGH THE FOUNDATION WALL AND DISCOVERED IT CONNECTS TO THE MINES.
"THAT'S WHERE WE ALSO SAW LOTS OF BARRELS BEING STORED."
DAMN. NORMAN, GET EVERYONE INTO THE BASEMENT.
GO!
"MY GOD! THEY BROKE THROUGH!"
SKRAKRASHHHHH

THEY'RE EVERYWHERE.
CAN'T RUN ANY HIGHER...
THE TRICK'S NOT TO GO UP...
...BUT DOWN!
CHK

YAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH
"BRET?"

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
WADE? YOU WON'T BELIEVE IT, BUT I'VE BEEN CHASED BY GIANT SPIDERS ALL DAY.

NO... NO... THEY'RE HERE? IN THE TUNNELS?
YEAH. JUST BEHIND ME. BUT I THINK I LOST THEM. WHAT'S GOING ON?

SHUT UP. JUST GIVE ME YOUR DAMNED BIKE.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING, WADE? LET--

CHK CHK
SKRRAAWWWWWWW
CHK
N-NO... NOOOOOO!

YYAAAAHHHHH

WUUNNGGGG
SOMETHING FELL BEHIND THAT GRATING. GET READY BUT DON'T FIRE UNTIL I GIVE THE WORD.
LET'S SEE WHAT IT TAKES TO TAKE THESE THINGS DOWN.
DON'T SHOOT! I'M NOT A SPIDER.
CHRIS? ARE YOU OKAY?
DO I LOOK OKAY? HELP ME OUT OF HERE.
DID YOU GET THE CALL THROUGH?
THE OPERATOR WOULDN'T BELIEVE ME.
WHERE'S HARLAN?
HE...HE DIDN'T MAKE IT.
I DON'T THINK IT'S SAFE HERE.
IDERSPAY ON THE ALLWAY.
CHK CHK
CHK CHK
RUN!
CHK CHK
CHK CHK
THIS TIME EVERYONE DID. BUT WERE WE RUNNING FROM THAT GROTESQUE MONSTER CHASING US, OR WERE WE BEING HERDED TOWARD SOMETHING WORSE?

THEN, OUT OF NOWHERE...
IT'S OKAY. I GOT HIM!
SKKRUNNCHHHH
WE'VE GOT TO KEEP MOVING.
NOT THAT WAY. THERE'S MORE BEHIND ME. ONE OF THEM JUST KILLED MY STEPDAD.
W-WADE?
BRET, WHAT DO YOU THINK IS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THAT DOOR?
I--I DON'T KNOW. GOD, I-IT WAS HORRIBLE...
WADE... HE MADE A DEAL WITH VIROANOL.
BRET, I'M SORRY... ABOUT YOUR DAD.
YEAH. THANKS.
ASH...?
I--
I'M SO SORRY, TOO.
I SWEAR, ASH, IF WE EVER GET OUT OF HERE ALIVE, I'LL NEVER ACT LIKE A JERK WITH YOU AGAIN.
BRET... THANKS.
PEOPLE, WE'VE GOT TO KEEP MOVING!

YOU SMELL THAT, SHERIFF? METHANE. LOTS OF IT.
MEANS WE CAN'T USE OUR WEAPONS. ONE SPARK AND A FIRE COULD BLOW THIS WHOLE PLACE UP.

CHRIS, BACK IN THE STORAGE ROOM WE KILLED A MALE ORB WEAVER. THAT MEANS THE FEMALE CAN'T BE FAR.
SO?

CONSUELA'S GOING TO BE THREE TIMES BIGGER THAN WHAT WE JUST FOUGHT. AND MAYBE TEN TIMES MORE DANGEROUS.

JUST WHAT I NEEDED. BRET, CAN I BORROW YOUR MOTORCYCLE?
O-OKAY. WHY?

IT'S WHAT MIKE SAID. IF THE ORB WEAVER COCOONS ITS PREY ALIVE, THEN MAYBE AUNT GLADYS...
MAYBE THERE'S STILL TIME TO SAVE HER.

SAM...I HAVE TO TELL YOU SOMETHING.
NOW?
I SHOULD HAVE TOLD YOU YEARS AGO. WHEN I LEFT TOWN...

I KNOW. YOU BEAT UP MY EX WHEN YOU FOUND OUT HE WAS CHEATING ON ME. YOU DIDN'T TELL ME BECAUSE YOU DIDN'T WANT TO BREAK UP MY FAMILY.
YOU KNEW?

YOUR FATHER TOLD ME. AND HE ALSO SAID YOU LOVED ME.
NOW GET GOING SO YOU CAN MAKE IT UP TO ME LATER.
I'LL LEAD EVERYONE OUT TO THE MINE'S GENERATORS.
DAD TOLD HER?
BE SAFE, CHRIS.
ORB WEAVER...
IT'S A BABY.
CHK CHK CHK CHK
CHK CHK
CHK CHK
AND THERE'S NEVER JUST ONE.
CHK CHK CHK CHK CHK CHK CHK CHK

CHK CHK CHK CHK CHK
THAT'S ALL WE CAN HEAR; THAT ENDLESS, SPIDER CLACKING. THEY ARE EVERYWHERE...
HUNHUNHUNHUNH AUNT GLADYS? CAN YOU HEAR ME?
BEHIND US. AHEAD OF US. WE CAN ONLY RUN. RUN AND PRAY.

AUNT GLADYS!
EVEN IF YOU CAN'T TALK--PLEASE LET ME KNOW...

--YOU'RE ALIVE?!?
WHOOP WHOOP

HOLD ON-- I'M GETTING MY KNIFE.
C-C-CH-CHRIS...
BREATHE. TRY TO BREATHE.

AM I... DEAD?
'CAUSE, BOY, YOU LOOK LIKE AN ANGEL...ALL THAT GOLD.
GOLD?

MY GOD...
AUNT GLADYS, YOU KNOW WHAT THIS IS?
IT'S THE AQUA MESA.

DAD WAS RIGHT.
HE FOUND IT. HE FOUND THE LOST MINE!

NO SMOKING. THERE'S METHANE EVERYWHERE, REMEMBER?
I CAN'T SMOKE? HELL, SONNY, YOU SHOULDA LEFT ME IN THAT THING.

HMMM GIVE ME YOUR MATCHBOOK. I'VE GOT AN IDEA.

WHAT'RE YA DOIN', BOY? WHY AREN'T WE GETTING THE HELL OUT OF HERE?
IN A SEC.

FIRST I NEED TO PUT THIS INTO ONE OF THE BROKEN BULBS.
YOU EVER GO TO CHURCH?
NEVER.

WELL, MAYBE YOU SHOULD START PRAYING ANYWAY.
OKAY. GET ON THE BIKE.
WHAT?

JUST THIS ONE TIME, PLEASE DON'T ARGUE WITH--
OH. MY. GOD.
AUNT GLADYS, MEET CONSUELA.

CHK CHK
BAM BAM
CHK CHK
BANG BANG
MOM, THE GENERATORS DON'T HAVE GAS.
LOOK AROUND. ALL WE NEED IS ENOUGH TO SET OFF A SINGLE ELECTRICAL SURGE.
THERE'S NOTHING. WE'RE DOOMED.
MOM, WHAT ABOUT THE STUN GUN? WILL IT WORK?
ASHLEY, YOU'RE A GENIUS.
GET BACK, EVERYONE. WE'RE GONNA BLOW THIS POPSICLE STAND.
IT ALL COMES DOWN TO THIS: A SINGLE MOMENT. A SINGLE CHARGE. IF IT WORKS, IF WE CAN GET OUT OF THE TUNNELS IN TIME. IN SHORT, IF WE'RE VERY LUCKY...
...THEN WE WON'T DIE ALONG WITH THE SPIDERS.
BUT CHRIS HAS NO IDEA WHAT WE'RE DOING.

GOD HELP HIM. HE'S NOT GOING TO MAKE IT.
BUT, IF PROSPERITY'S TO SURVIVE, I'VE GOT TO DO THIS NOW.
MIKE, WE'VE GOT TO GO.
YOU BREAK THE BULBS LIKE CHRIS SAID?
OF COURSE.
SHOWTIME!
WHIIIPP
THE BULBS...
SAM DID IT. GLADYS, HOLD ME TIGHT.
THIS IS GOING TO BE A BUMPY RIDE!
WHOOOMMPP
WHA-BOOOMM

WAS THAT A *METHANE* EXPLOSION?
WHY? YOU WANT TO *SMOKE* NOW?
YOU KIDDING? THAT STUFF'LL *KILL* YA.
BA-RROOOMMMMMM
IT'S *CHRIS*. HE MADE IT.
THANK GOD.
BA-WOOOMM
BA-WOOOMM
BA-WOOOMM
IT'S OVER. IT'S FINALLY *OVER*.

CHRIS. I WAS SO AFRAID.
So was I, Sam. So was I.
BACK THERE. BEFORE. WHAT YOU SAID. YOU KNEW? ALL THIS TIME?
YOUR DAD TOLD ME YOU LOVED ME. I JUST NEEDED TO HEAR YOU SAY IT.
GEEZE! DID HE TELL EVERYONE ALL MY PERSONAL STUFF?
WELL, IT IS A SMALL TOWN.
MY GOD.
CONSUELA!

BAM
BAM
BAM
WON'T... YOU... JUST... DIE!!

WHAA WOOOOMPH
SO THAT'S MY STORY, MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS, AND YOU CAN *BELIEVE* IT OR NOT, BUT THE FACT IS I DON'T CARE.

I KNOW WHAT I SAW. I KNOW WHAT WE FOUGHT. AN' I KNOW HOW I JUST ABOUT *DIED*, BUT STILL MANAGED TO *SURVIVE*.
LIKE I *ALWAYS* DO.

WADE TURNED UP, TOO. I'M THINKING HE SHOULD BE OUTTA PRISON, IN, OH, A FEW YEARS.
I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE ASKING YOURSELF. WHAT ABOUT THE *AQUA MESA*?

WELL, IT WAS *LEGEND* BEFORE CHRIS'S DAD FOUND IT. AND AS FAR AS YOU PEOPLE ARE CONCERNED, IT'S *LEGEND* AGAIN.

THIS IS HARLAN GRIFFITH SIGNING OFF AT *KFRE* FREEDOM RADIO, RIGHT HERE IN BEAUTIFUL PROSPERITY, ARIZONA.
GOOD NIGHT. SLEEP TIGHT. AN' ABOVE ALL, DON'T LET THE *BED BUGS* BITE.
THE END.

EIGHT-LEGGED FREAKS: THE PRODUCTION

BY TERRY J. ERDMANN

"A lot of people are just really afraid of spiders," says director Ellory Elkayem. "It's about the legs. The eight legs. The eight hairy legs. The creepy crawliness of eight hairy legs. And they're particularly afraid of black spiders. Anything that's black and hairy and has a lot of legs, that's where the fear comes from."

It's clear that Elkayem, a gentle young man with a ready smile, has no such fears. Quite the opposite, in fact. He developed an enthusiastic interest in spiders while making short films in New Zealand. "I was experimenting with various genres," Elkayem says, "just finding my style. I'd always enjoyed scary movies, so I started rewatching those great, old 'giant bug' movies of the '50s, and thinking about what it would be like to reinvent them with modern visual effects and really good acting."

Armed with a grant from the New Zealand Film Commision, Elkayem wrote, produced, and directed a 13-minute, black-and-white, 1950's-style science fiction film titled *Larger Than Life,* about a small spider that gets exposed to a toxic substance, grows to monumental proportions, and terrorizes a woman in her home. The finished film received rave reviews at numerous international film festivals, and it wasn't long before producers Dean Devlin and Roland Emmerich heard about it. To them, it was like hearing that lightning had struck in two places at the same time.

"Roland and I had been talking about the 1950's movies *Tarantula* and *Them!,* Devlin says. "We'd made two alien movies, (*Stargate* and *Independence Day*) and a reptile movie (*Godzilla*), but we'd never done a bug picture."

"Bug" pictures, and specifically giant bug pictures, proliferated in the late 1950s, starting with the best of them all, the giant ant movie, *Them!* in 1954. *Them!* was followed quickly by titles like *The Deadly Mantis, Attack of the Giant Leeches* and even a French effort, *Les Escargots.* But it was the films that featured giant spiders, such as 1955s *Tarantula,* 1957s *The Black Scorpion* (cousin to the spider), and one scene in 1957s *The Incredible Shrinking Man,* that scared up the most memorable scenes for the movie-going audience.

"We thought that no one had done a movie like that in a long time," Devlin says. "We started thinking, 'What if we made a low budget movie but put really big budget visual effects into it? Would that be a way to breathe life back into a lost genre? Ellory's short film was precisely in the vein we had been discussing," states Devlin. "We knew that this was an opportunity to revitalize that dormant genre."

Elkayem was clearly the man for the job, despite his relative inexperience at film-making. "He had a vision," Devlin says. "Sometimes you just have to take a chance on people, believe in that vision, and go for the ride."

Devlin and Emmerick introduced Elkayem to screenwriter Jesse Alexander, and the four of them began to develop a screenplay. "We all agreed that when the story wasn't scary it should be funny and when it wasn't funny it should be scary," Elkayem recalls. "And we wanted a lot of suspense, as well."

Elkayem had done extensive research on the many "cool" varieties of spiders when writing *Larger Than Life,* but the 13-minute film couldn't accomodate more than one. "I wanted many different species of spiders to attack people," the director laughs. *Eight-Legged Freaks* gave him a multitude of opportunities.

"We focus on five different types of arachnids: the spitting spiders, the orb weavers, tarantulas, jumping spiders, and trap-door spiders," Devlin says. "They each have their own movements and their own personalities. In our film, they behave exactly as their natural instincts have always dictated. It's realistic--except that the spiders are bigger."

The screenwriters borrowed several staples of the 50s genre they were emulating. "Some of those early stories are told from a kid's point of view," Elkayem observes. "That's a really interesting viewpoint because, of course, none of the adults will believe him. That's why we made a boy central to our story."

The second element the filmmakers brought forward from the 50s was the setting. "Dean and Roland really wanted it set in a small desert town in the middle of nowhere," Elkayem says. They found the perfect location in the town of Superior, Arizona, in the Superstition Wilderness area near Phoenix. The town has a long history of mining, but today the mines are closed, making them, and the town, readily available as film locations.

A 200-foot tall steel tower that rises above the vertical entrance shaft of the

mines, known since 1910 as the Magma Copper Company's Silver Queen, served for the exterior shots. But at over half a mile below the surface, shooting inside the Mine's tunnels was impractical. Instead, the filmmakers found a nearby defunct shopping mall where the art department constructed 150 feet of fiberglass tunnel reproductions in the space that once had been a Montgomery Ward department store.

Making the tunnels appear realistic for the live action photography was simple compared to creating the spiders that live inside those tunnels. Obviously, the 1950s special effects that inspired the filmmakers have little resemblance to today's computer –generated visual effects. " 'Cheesy' is the first word that comes to mind," Devlin laughs. "Of course, they weren't really cheesy at the time, but now when you look back at them, they look that way."

Even *Them!,* the best of the early giant bug pictures, utilized rather simple effects. Computer animation had yet to be invented; the tools of the trade at the time were models, miniatures, stop-motion photography, photographic mattes, and rear projection. For *Them!,* the producers built one full-scale mechanical ant. A motor in its body moved the model's legs, but it couldn't walk by itself--it was towed along on a camera dolly. A second model, consisting only of an ant's fore-quarter and head, was mounted on a camera crane. The technical crew operated a series of gears and levers to make the antennae and mandibles move. And a number of smaller models had heads and antennae that bobbed in the breeze from a wind machine.

The producers of *Tarantula* relied mainly on matted-in spiders, and also used a model of gnashing mandibles for the closeups. *The Black Scorpion* used stop motion techniques effectively, while the 1956 film, *Earth Vs. The Spider* combined matte techiques with live tarantulas. On the most "cheesy" end of the scale, producers of 1975s ludicrous *The Giant Spider Invasion* simply covered a Volkswagon Beetle with fur, strapped furry legs onto the body, and drove their "spider" into oblivion.

Emmerich and Devlin, who have helped to expand the boundaries of visual effects technology with their work on "Independence Day" and "Godzilla," couldn't wait to get started on the effects. "Actually," Devlin says, "we did an enormous amount of work on animating the spiders even before our first day of shooting the live action film."

"When the producers asked, 'How big can we make the jumping spider?' Visual Effects Producer Drew McKeen reveals, "our answer was, 'How big do you want it to be?' We built them in the computer from six inches high up to six feet high. Now, with those legs, our female orb weaver, Consuella, has a twenty-two foot stance."

"Our original goal was to make the spiders look realistic," Visual Effects Supervisor Thomas Dadras adds. "But once we did that, the producers wanted us to start making variations."

"For instance, we placed some of the spider's eyes more frontally," McKeen says. "It gives them even more menacing features."

To some people, those who find the sight of even a common garden – sized spider terrifying, the arachnids might have seemed menacing enough already. But to the producers, some of the them were a little too glamorous for their own good. Take, for example, the tarantula. "The tarantula is very furry," Dadras continues, "which makes it look threatening and dangerous as a small spider. But when we blew it up to the size of an SUV, the fur started looking too friendly. It looked great, but it also looked cuddly--like a teddy bear. We had to go back in and make bald spots.

"Dean, Roland, and Ellory decided that the tarantula should be like a tank," Dadras says. "Not the fastest moving spider, but definitely the strongest. We gave it claws like a lobster, so that they could puncture and tear and rip things up. And after we took that artistic license in their appearance, they wrote it into the script. Now the tarantula climbs up on Harlan's trailer and starts piercing through it. And that's the 'equipment' that the spiders use to break into the mall."

In the end, twenty research and development artists and seventy animators and compositors created and used software specifically designed for their task of setting up a "virtual" arachnid world inside their computers. "The effects are so elaborate and so complicated," McKeen emphasizes, "and so many experts had to be involved in the process that no single person really knew how to do everything. It's just the nature of the beast. We worked on the animation for eighteen months until we completed over 200 shots."

"Now our lost genre movie has 'millennium' visual effects driving it," Devlin chuckles. "It's as if we've taken a Volkswagon and put a Porsche engine into it."

TERRY J. ERDMANN WAS UNIT PUBLICIST FOR *EIGHT LEGGED FREAKS.*

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